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USSR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WORLD WAR II

During the first part of World War II, from June to November 1941, Hitler was able to seize unusually rich and large industrial lands of the western USSR including a considerable portion of the Ukraine, Belorussia, Central Russia, and the Baltic countries. Before the war, about 40 percent of the USSR population inhabited this area, which supplied 63 percent of the coal, 68 percent of the pig iron, 58 percent of the steel, and 60 percent of the aluminum produced in the USSR.

Before the war, the grain producing areas -- the Ukraine, North Caucasus, and other regions -- supplied 38 percent of USSR grain, 84 percent of its sugar, 38 percent of its cattle, and 60 percent of other livestock. Despite war losses, the USSR supplied up to 68 million tons of grain to the army and to the urban population during the period from 1941 to 1944.

The USSR had to convert its economy to war production at a time when its industrial output had fallen 2.1 times and when the main source of raw materials was in enemy hands. Despite these great losses, the USSR mobilized great economic reserves, converted its entire economy to war production, and not only restored its defense potential but also developed it.

During the war, up to 1,300 large industrial plants, millions of people, and the great wealth of the country were evacuated to eastern USSR territory. It took 3-4 weeks to rehabilitate the plants and to begin production. Within 2-3 months, these plants were producing at a faster rate than before the war.

The war and its inherent difficulties, such as labor shortages, transportation difficulties, shortages of food provisions, and other factors did not thwart the potential development of Soviet economy. On the contrary, the pace of industrial development increased considerably above the prewar level. Soviet industrial production increased 1.5 times in 1942 and 17 percent in 1943. During the war, a number of large blast furnaces were built in the Ural Mountains in 7-9 months, whereas before the war 2-3 years were required to build a large blast furnace. Now it takes 5-6 months to build one of these furnaces.

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During the 3 war years (1942, 1943, 1944) 2,250 large industrial plants were put into operation in eastern USSR territory, over 6,000 plants were put into operation in liberated areas, and 100,000 machine tools, 24 large blast furnaces, 128 open-hearth furnaces, four Bessemer converters, 70 electric furnaces, 56 rolling mills, 67 coking oven batteries with a capacity of 73 million tons, electric power installations with a capacity of 3 million kilowatts, and 5,860 kilometers of railroad track were put into operation.

During the same period, airplane production increased 4 times, tank production 7-8 times, cannon production 6-7 times, mortar production 8 times, and ammunition production 4 times. The USSR not only equaled German war production but exceeded it considerably, as illustrated by the following table:

<u>Type of Weapon</u>	<u>USSR Annual Production During the 3 War Years</u>	<u>German Produc- tion in 1944</u>
Tanks, armored cars, tank guns	30,000	20,000
Airplanes	40,000	30,000
Cannon and mortars	220,000	50,000

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